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havior of its people, simple as well as sophisticated. The main trouble with the story is its too unmanageable plot.

Madge Lockerby dwells with her Uncle Andrew, a worn, discouraged man, deriving a bare livelihood from an infertile farm; with Andrew's senile and sometimes violently insane old mother; and with the beautiful but feeble-minded Lola, her own father's illegitimate daughter, whom she maternally loves. A young artist, who comes to paint the valley, charms her and stirs her imagination. This is the real beginning of her inner struggle; but it is a struggle curiously complicated by circumstances. Lola is lured away by an organ-grinder with a monkey, and Madge finds the right clue just too late to rescue her.

The thing is well imagined and plausibly carried out, but Madge's Odyssey is, after all, an awkward episode. It takes the Lost Valley girl into many unfamiliar places—into the Italian quarters of Boston and New York. It enables her to make the acquaintance of a philosophic old Chinaman, who dwells in the neighborhood of Pell Street. The objection to all this is not that it is unreal, for it isn't; nor that it is devoid of significance, for it is pleasant and instructive to see how little Madge is "broadened" by all this knocking about, and how much she is deepened and steadied—just because she is Madge. The real objection to this part of the story is that it takes such a deal of *telling*. It wanders on almost in the familiar style of the conventional story for boys between twelve and fifteen years of age. Mrs. Gerould becomes so obsessed with the necessity of telling this part of the story that she even tells how the partner of Guiseppe, the organ grinder, was slain by falling on his own dagger in an attempt to murder Guiseppe, how Lola was unintentionally stabbed and mortally wounded as she attempted to save the monkey, and how part of the monkey's tail was accidentally cut off in the *mêlée*. That an author who has the good sense to let Andrew Lockerby hang himself off stage, and to permit Granny Lockerby to die without an audible groan, should feel obliged to relate all this, is remarkable.

Except for this episode—a thing so difficult to handle seriously and artistically—Mrs. Gerould's technique would be wholly adequate if she permitted herself to change the point of view less often and if she could refrain from appearing too frequently in her character as author to comment on the persons of her story.

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SHAKESPEARE: A PLAY. By Clifford Bax and H. F. Rubinstein. New York: Houghton Mifflin Company.

Two plays about Shakespeare have recently appeared—both daringly imaginative, both challenging in their determination to humanize a great figure even at the risk of degrading him, both testifying to a certain impatience with the Shakespeare of tradition and of scholarly interpretation. The young man of Stratford, the hero of the deer-stealing episode, the irrepressible wag who is

said to have written scurrilous verses about Sir Thomas Lucy, does not appear in either play. Neither does the shrewd man of business, the solid Stratford citizen, the merry companion of Ben Jonson, nor the man who wrote the will bequeathing his second-best bed to his wife. Truth to say, the playwrights in each case seem to have cared precious little about the historical record and the tradition (such as it is), and in both cases to have been almost unduly fascinated by the sonnets.

As to the legitimacy of such attempts, there may be different opinions—and opinions only. On the one hand, it is reasonable to feel that in the case of one concerning whom so little is known, the playwright had better keep his hands off. Let Shakespeare be known only through his plays—knowing the plays, we know the best of him, and apparently he would have wished us to know little more. On the other hand, it is possible to maintain that it is far more justifiable to write of one concerning whom little or nothing is known than to introduce into a drama a well-known historical figure, like Lincoln. On pragmatic principles, everyone is entitled to his own Shakespeare, as much as he is entitled to his own beliefs regarding the hereafter. To those who prefer some sort of living Shakespeare to the lay figure of the critics, both plays will be in varying degrees acceptable. Apart from this, the problem is simply to appraise the comparative success of each.

The *Will Shakespeare* of Clemence Dane is masque-like, sentimental, notably uneven in execution. It is not, as a whole, a first-rate drama, though it is vital enough in its way. The *Shakespeare* of Messrs. Bax and Rubinstein is the better *play*.

The reasons for this difference, as one perceives or guesses at them, are twofold.

Both plays are, to be sure, romantic in their interpretation of character; and that is one's chief objection to both, so far as one has any objection: there is an evident disposition to *modernize* Shakespeare, to make him live for modern readers, by making him romantic. It has seemed to many critics that, of all the Shakespearean characters, Hamlet is probably the nearest to Shakespeare's real self. But there is little true suggestion of Hamlet in the *Shakespeare* of Bax and Rubinstein; there is even a hint of Werther. In his period of gloom and depression this Shakespeare contemplates a cowardly suicide, and has to be consoled and brought back to normality by his daughter Judith. It is a sentimental procedure which Rousseau would have reveled in. Think of Hamlet or Romeo being weaned from despair by domestic blandishments! But, on the whole, Messrs. Bax and Rubinstein have imagined along the lines of *dramatic reality* rather than sheer romance. Mainly, they have dramatized rather than *sentimentalized*. True dramatization produces an effect not far from reality, an effect which, when one makes allowance for the tendency of the theatre to exaggerate and simplify motives, may be regarded as an acceptable substitute for reality. Thus, from the dramatic standpoint, one can forgive the authors for making so much of the supposititious "dark lady" and the

unidentified "Mr. W. H." If the triangular situation is necessary to the play, then by all means, on with the play!

Actually, of course, the apparent progress which critics have noted in Shakespeare's plays, from youthful buoyancy through embitterment to some sort of hard-won serenity, is not necessarily different from what all of us experience in some degree in this miserable and naughty world. No dramatic situation, no intrigue, is needed to explain it, and the practice of drawing large inferences from the Sonnets, is, if dramatically justifiable, a biographical impertinence. Nevertheless, as aforesaid, on with the play! The play, as a play, is good.

Another factor that enters into the reality of the result is the judiciousness of the style. As Mr. A. W. Pollard remarks in his introductory note: "It is extraordinarily hard to make Elizabethans talk without their talk jarring on the reader who has even a slight acquaintance with Elizabethan English as incongruous and impossible. The talk in this play seldom jars." The reason would seem to be that the authors, resisting the temptation to indulge in a pseudo-Shakespearean, pseudo-poetic diction, have taken their cue from Shakespeare's prose passages—his fascinating and too little noticed prose passages. It is in these, often, that one finds that lucidity and restraint which offsets the effect of the "thick crowding fancies", and which is necessary to complete one's conception of Shakespeare's mind. Moreover, one cannot put the Shakespeare of the poetic passages into a play or a story; all that one could do would be, very crudely, to personify and dramatize his literary imagination.

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**WILL SHAKESPEARE: A Four-Act Drama in Blank Verse.** By Clemence Dane. New York: the Macmillan Company.

As Mr. Bax and Mr. Rubinstein aim at dramatic reality, where truth is wanting, Miss Dane inclines to romance. The former appears to be the preferable alternative. Since the artist must have some principle or instinct to guide him—something that will help him out when first-hand knowledge or intuition fails—it is better for him to say, "Let us, at worst, be dramatic," than to say, "Let us, at all events, be romantic." Whatever is truly dramatic is at least human: the point of view of the drama is the humanistic point of view. The playwright is almost of necessity, many-sided, skeptical, a good judge of values in the ordinary sense.

Miss Dane goes distinctly farther than do Messrs. Bax and Rubinstein—decidedly too far, it may be thought—in representing Shakespeare as a kind of romantic, literary Dick Whittington, terribly conscious of his genius and of his destiny, setting off for London, in spite of his wife's entreaties, and brutally accusing that singularly sensitive and prescient woman of having deluded him into a marriage on the false plea of necessity. Shakespeare, as he goes out of the house, visibly bears upon his back the burden of all his future glories. He is, indeed, not merely a romantic Dick Whittington, but a romantic monster. He